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A Quest for Learning and Beyond:

Aiming at Second Chance Education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

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Abstract

Violent conflict poses huge challenges and restrictions on people's lives and their fundamental rights, including their right to education. Faced with unceasing humanitarian crises around the world, there is a growing concern about how to deliver education in emergencies. Among the wide variety of issues existing in this emerging field, this paper focuses on "second chance" education for the people who drop out of school due to violent conflict, using a case study from Palestine.

Decades-long military occupation has profoundly deprived Palestinians of their land, homes, properties, and other basic human rights. Denial of Palestinian social and individual self-determination has continued for generations with no end in sight. Nevertheless, Palestinians struggle to build their lives and society, and education is one endeavor where significant efforts are being exerted resulting in considerable achievements. Among those efforts is a two-year educational program called "al-taleem al-moazy (parallel learning)." The Ministry of Education of the Palestinian Authority runs this program to ensure education for adults and adolescents who have dropped out of school. Focusing on those who graduated from this program, this paper attempts to uncover the voices of people who have missed out on education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip – collectively referred to as the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). This contributes to the deepening of our insights into the meaning of education in the oPt, as not enough attention has been paid to the experience of lost education within a relatively "educated" society.

The research draws on life-stories collected through in-depth interviews as its primary source of information. 23 graduates of the Moazy program were interviewed for the purpose of understanding how their schooling or education was interrupted, what it is like to be "uneducated" in society, and what internal and external factors enabled them to go back to education. The interviews reveal that the ways in which the occupation hampers education extend far beyond those of direct measures such as school closures, detention, and movement restrictions. The occupation disrupts every aspect of life in the oPt, including the economy and psychology of the Palestinians. This has a significant impact on the ability and willingness of families to send their children to school. The life-stories, in particular, of many female interviewees illuminate the predicaments of girls in which families force their daughters to leave school and marry at an early age as a safer alternative in an environment of a military occupation that consequently induces violence, harassment, and restrictions.

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Despite all those difficulties, many interviewees showed a strong conviction that they had inherent rights to education and their own potential for the future. That seems to be a significant enabler for regaining access to education. It was also observed that the Palestinian cultural environment and social atmosphere highly appreciates education to the extent that being “uneducated” brings a sense of embarrassment. This cultural and social norm appears to be a major motivation for some interviewees to seek a second chance for education. The study also concludes that Palestinian society highly values education as its pursuit aspires towards three achievements: a sense of autonomy and dignity for the individual and the community in the environment where anything can be taken any time by the occupation forces; a foundation for keeping hopes alive that a future is achievable despite the harsh and seemingly never-ending reality of the occupation; and the ownership of their own voice when arguing for justice in the larger world and global community.

Keywords: Palestine, second chance education, conflict, life-story, dignity

Introduction

> *Education makes you feel your value...and makes you a wonderful and cultured person.…with your culture... you can prove your character and existence. …Educated people develop their societies, and they become supporters to their home and nation.*
>
> (From a life-story interview with a woman in the West Bank)

In the summer of 2014, more than 2,200 lives were lost, 11,000 people were injured and 110,000 displaced[1] in just 51 days in a small enclave on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean – the Gaza Strip (GS), a part of the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). The casualties were caused in the intensive air raids and ground incursions by the Israeli Defense Forces[2] into the tiny strip, where more than 1.9 million people live in a space less than half of the land area of New York City.[3] Life in the GS had already been devastated due to an eight-year long blockade, and the assaults renewed the devastation and desperation. Around the same period, the West Bank (WB), the other part of the oPt that has a population of 3 million in an area 15 times larger than the GS,[4] experienced a series of raids by the occupation forces on more than 1,200 homes or private properties and the arrest of over 500 people without charge other than to be "allegedly" a member or supporter of Hamas. Such extra-judicial treatments are not unusual in this area, but the scale at that time was massive. It followed the killing of three young residents of illegal Israeli settlements in the WB.[5]

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[1] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution S-21/1*, June 23 2015, A/HRC/29/CRP.4.

[2] On the Israeli side of the border, four civilians were killed by rockets and missiles launched from the GS by Hamas and some other groups (UNOCHA oPt, *Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency Situation Report* (as of September 4 2014, 08:00 hrs), https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_04_09_2014.pdf

[3] The size of the GS is 365 km^2 and the population is 1,943,398 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics [PCBS], 2017, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang__en/881/default.aspx#Population).

[4] The size of the WB is 5,655 km^2 and the population is 3,008,770 (PCBS 2017).

[5] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015: Israel/Palestine – Events of 2014.* https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/israel/palestine

Such assaults added to the great humanitarian crises Palestinians have experienced resulting from occupation violence since 1967. Left stateless under the military occupation by Israel, Palestinians nevertheless struggle to build their lives and society, and education is one of the areas where they have been exerting significant effort. While facing great challenges, as documented by Abu-Duhou (1996), Assaf (1997), Nicolai (2006, 2007), and EAPPI (2013), Palestinians have been famous for their high appreciation of education. A large body of literature states that education has fundamental significance for Palestinians both in the oPt and in exile, as one or the only means for hope, safety, or survival (e.g., Winternitz 1991; Fronk et al., 1999; Van Dyke 2002; Nicolai 2006, 2007; Jabr 2009).

This great interest is reflected in the Palestinians' actual achievements in education, such as a primary school completion rate of 97% and a youth literacy rate of 99% (World Bank 2016). While these indicators are comparable enough to regional neighbors, what draws special attention is Palestinians' achievement in higher education, as has been pointed out for decades (Tahir 1985; Hallaj 1980; World Bank 1993; Alzaroo and Hunt 2003; UNDP 2003). The recent statistics also show that Palestinian tertiary enrollment rate is the fifth highest in the 16 Middle East and North African countries.[6]

Considering the multiple negative impacts violent conflict has on education that are well documented in a UNESCO report of 2011 (UNESCO 2011), it is remarkable that people trapped in one of the most protracted conflicts in the contemporary world have achieved so much. Many point out that forced displacement and military occupation have pushed Palestinians towards such achievements. Faced with the decades-long loss of their homes, property, and land, Palestinians have seen education as a "possession that could neither be destroyed nor confiscated" (Fronk et al. 1999, 219).

There have been a few studies that have focused on the attitude of Palestinians towards

[6] The rate is 44.28% (2015) according to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), and is highest after Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.

education. From a study involving 40 interviews with 13 refugee families covering three generations in the WB, Alzaroo and Hunt (2003) identified three ways in which education works as a "coping strategy" for Palestinians: it is a remedy for the 1948 catastrophe; a mechanism for political, economic, and social mobilization; and a tool for building national identity (173). In an exploration of the meaning of school under political violence, Akesson (2015) revealed the dual nature that school has for Palestinians, i.e., it is both a place of violence and of hope, expressed during interviews with 18 families in the WB.

Referring to those previous studies, this paper contributes to the deepening of our insights into the meaning of education for Palestinians living in the oPt by shedding light on an aspect that has been paid less attention – the experience of missing out on formal education in a relatively "educated" society. Through in-depth interviews, the authors collected the life-stories of 23 adults and adolescents in the WB and the GS who had dropped out of school for occupation-related reasons, but later obtained a "second chance" for education by joining a two-year program called "*al-taleem al-moazy* (parallel learning)" (hereinafter referred to as "Moazy"). Through uncovering the pathways these interviewees followed, this study reveals how education in the oPt has been disrupted, what it is like to be "uneducated" in Palestinian society, what internal and external factors enabled school drop-outs to go back to education, and what the roles and values of education are for people living under military occupation.

In the following sections, the authors at first review the overall history of the conflict to provide readers with sufficient understanding of the context in which Palestinians in the oPt have lived both as individuals and as community over generations. This is critically important for capturing the actual meaning of and the reasons behind the words of the life-story interviewees, as the collective experiences of loss of homeland and long-standing denial of national self-determination including decades-long and ongoing military occupation are deeply embedded in – and in a way define – the lives of individual Palestinians living in the oPt to date. Then, we explain the research methodology including the procedures for the life-story interviews and the challenges

and limitations the authors faced in conducting them. Third, the research findings are provided together with a discussion of their interpretations and significance. Finally, the authors conclude the paper by presenting some implications for policy makers and practitioners working on the implementation of Moazy, and more broadly, on educational development in conflict-affected areas.

1. The Context of the Conflict and Education in Palestine

1.1 Origin and Nature of the Conflict

The so called "Israeli-Palestinian conflict" has its roots on the immigration of European Zionists to Palestine in the 1880s. Triggered by pogroms in Eastern Europe that were a violent manifestation of generations-long persecution, a group of Zionists envisioned establishing a "Jewish state" somewhere outside Europe. Palestine – a part of the Ottoman Empire then – was chosen as their destination despite the fact that the land had been inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Arabs for centuries. Thus, the Zionists' vision of a "Jewish state" was not feasible without the exclusion of that indigenous population from their native land. This time was the heyday of imperialism in which emerging European "nation states" colonized non-European lands. As Edward Said stated, "it was as part of this general movement of acquisition and occupation that Zionism was launched" (Said 1979, 69).

The disputes between the European immigrants and local Arab populations – Palestinians – increased as the number of the former grew. The contradictory promises by the British Empire deepened the conflict. On one hand, in 1916 they promised the Arabs independence from the Ottoman Empire in territories that included Palestine (McMahon–Hussein Correspondence). On the other hand, the same government said in 1917 that they "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people"[7] (the Balfour Declaration). Furthermore,

[7] A letter from the Foreign Office of the United Kingdom dated November 2nd, 1917.

Britain also had a secret agreement with France and Russia on the division of the Ottoman territories.

Britain was approved as a Mandatory for Palestine in 1922, but the mandate soon turned into a burden for them, due to both Palestinian grievances and a series of terror attacks by Zionists frustrated with a gradual "retreat" from the commitment in the Balfour Declaration (Charters 2007). In February 1947, Britain announced its willingness to withdraw from Palestine. Nine months later, the UN adopted a problematic partition plan for Palestine, which granted 54% of the land to the proposed "Jewish state" even though Jews constituted less than one-third of the total population in Palestine at that time (McDowall 1994, 24).

The partition plan intensified, rather than appeased, the confrontation between Palestinians and Zionists, which soon led to violent communal conflict. The Zionists – far better organized and armed – responded to every Palestinian attack with "destruction of the place or the expulsion of the residents" (MacDowell 1994, 25[8]). While such retaliatory assaults were severe enough to displace almost 75,000 Palestinians by early January 1948 (Pappe 2006, 97), the Zionists' tactics escalated in March 1948 into what is often described as ethnic cleansing (Pappe 2006, 98). Zionists attempted to seize as much land as possible by destroying Palestinian villages and expelling the residents regardless of the allotment in the partition plan ("Plan Dalet," issued on March 10, 1948, quoted from Pappe 2006, 96). As a result, about 300,000 Palestinians had been displaced at the time of declaration of independence of the State of Israel on May 15, 1948 (MacDowell 1994, 26).

War between the newly established Israel and the neighboring Arab states soon followed the declaration, resulting in the victory of the former who expanded their territory to 73% of the whole of Palestine (MacDowell 1994, 27). The consequences were devastating for Palestinians;

[8] MacDowell cited the words from Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Reality* (London and Sydney: Pantheon, 90), in which the words were indicated as a quotation from David Ben-Gurion, *War Diary*, December 19, 1947 (p.58).

nearly 75% of the total population – about 800,000 people – were displaced.[9] Most of them were expelled or took refuge in neighboring Arab countries especially Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as in the remaining land of Palestine known as the WB and the GS today, which came under the control of Jordan and Egypt, respectively.

1.2 Start and Continuation of the Military Occupation

Jordanian rule in the WB and Egyptian rule in the GS continued until another war occurred in 1967 between Israel and Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. Israel won a decisive victory and occupied the WB, GS, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights. As a result, 323,000 Palestinians were displaced, of whom 113,000 had been refugees since 1948 (Bowker 2003, 62). The occupation has continued to date in these areas except for Sinai, despite the call for Israeli withdrawal in UN Security Council Resolution 242.

The military occupation by Israel, pursuing an ethnically "cleansed" land for a "Jewish state," added a new dimension to the Palestinian predicament, e.g., arbitrary land confiscations, deportations, home demolitions, and "administrative detention" in which the occupation forces can detain Palestinians without charge for six months but in practice do so on an indefinitely renewable basis (MacDowell 1994, 86). Moreover, the construction of Jewish settlements that started in late 1967 and has grown to date (despite their illegality under international law) poses an imminent threat for Palestinians as the settlers are allowed to arm for "self-defense" (MacDowell 1994, 87). Furthermore, the preferential treatment given to the settlers in many aspects, including use of land and water resources, presented a sharp contrast to the discriminatory measures against Palestinians. Loss of land, imposed limits on water use, and restricted access to

[9] It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of those displaced. While the report by the UN Economic Survey Mission in 1949 estimated that 726,000 Palestinian Arabs were forced to become refugees, the report by the Refugee Office of the UN Palestine Conciliation Commission in 1950 said the number was 900,000 (Gilmour 1982, 74). Besides those refugees, there were 160,000 Palestinians remaining inside the area that became Israel, and 25% of them or 40,000 were forced to leave their home and became internally displaced (MacDowell 1994, 43).

markets led to the decline of the Palestinian economy and the increased dependency of its labor force on employment in Israel (MacDowell 1994, 89).

In December 1987, Palestinian resentment erupted in a mass demonstration called the *Intifada*. This was a grass-root, popular and non-violent uprising, in which ordinary Palestinians living under the occupation took the initiative, rather than being directed by political "leaders" in exile, i.e., the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), or neighboring Arab states (King 2007, 1-5). Faced with this new phenomenon, the occupation forces took military action to suppress the uprising, resulting in largely unequal casualties between Palestinians and Israelis with 1,124 killed of the former and 90 of the latter.[10]

The unprecedented popular uprising forced Israel to realize the cost of direct control of the occupied areas and therefore the need for finding a less costly way in maintaining occupation. Meanwhile, the PLO had also felt the necessity to alter their strategy of armed resistance because of its limited outcome, the decreased assistance from Arab countries, and the increasing popularity of emerging Islamist groups. These factors laid the ground for the Oslo Accords between the PLO and the Israeli government, in which both sides primarily agreed in 1993 on the beginning of limited self-rule by Palestinians in the oPt.[11] Based on this agreement, the Palestinian National Authority (PA) was established in 1994. However, contrary to the initial plan for it to be an interim body for five years, the PA has been working to date as an authority responsible for civil administration in *part* of the oPt, as a result of the de facto "demise" of the Oslo process (Baconi 2015).

The Oslo Accords failed since they just "devolve[ed] responsibility for controlling Palestinians to a body wholly dependent on and accountable to Israel" instead of ending the occupation (Roy 2002, 12). The Accords said nothing about the occupation, left all the important

[10] Casualties in the oPt, from Dec. 9, 1987 to Sep. 13, 1993, based on B'Tselem, *Fatalities in the first Intifada*, http://www.btselem.org/statistics/first_intifada_tables (accessed December 26, 2016). Almost half of the Israeli casualties (43) were security force members.

[11] Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed on September 13 1993, between the Government of Israel and the PLO.

issues, e.g., the status of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees' rights to return, unaddressed and kept Israel in control of all borders, which accelerated the decline of the Palestinian economy and left the Palestinians facing growing unemployment, poverty, and child-labor (Roy 2002, 19-20). Furthermore, the Oslo Accords disconnected the WB and the GS and even undermined the integrity of each enclave, especially in the WB, by introducing its division into Areas A, B, and C and the prohibition of access to Jerusalem by Palestinians except for those living inside the city. The PA is authorized for civilian control and internal security in Area A (about 18%), only for civilian control in Area B (22%) and has no control in Area C (60%).[12] Besides all the above, the Oslo Accords accepted, though implicitly, the existence of Jewish settlements,[13] which rapidly expanded thereafter.[14]

All these factors set up the environment for another Palestinian uprising. The second intifada, the Al Aqsa Intifada, broke out during September 2000. It was triggered by the Israeli Leader of the Opposition Ariel Sharon`s visit to what is known to Palestinians as *al haram al-sharif*, Islam's third holiest site in Jerusalem, and to the State of Israel as the Temple Mount. The uprising this time was far more violent with greater casualties of more than 4,000 deaths on the Palestinian side and 1,000 on the Israeli side.[15] The failure of the quasi-state institutions centering on the PA to organize a united, broader-based movement (Hammami and Tamari 2001, 6) drove the Palestinians' struggle into bloody despair, typically adopting suicide bombings as "martyrdom operations," where Islamist groups like Hamas played a central role (Jamal 2005, 156-157). On the other hand, Israeli reactions were also far more militarized and brutal than those in the first intifada, characterized by using heavy arms such as tanks and missiles along with snipers

[12] B'Tselem, *What is Area C?* http://www.btselem.org/area_c/what_is_area_c (accessed December 29 2016).
[13] Article XII-1, Oslo II (*The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip*), Washington, D.C., September 28 1995.
[14] According to the B'Tselem statistics, there were 350,010 settlers living in the WB (excluding East Jerusalem) as of the end of 2013 (http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics). This is almost three times as many as the settler population of 114,900 at the time of the Oslo Accord in 1993 (PASSIA 2013, 351).
[15] By September 2005 (Journal of Palestine Studies 2006).

(Hammami and Tamari 2001, 12).

The economic impact of the second intifada was also devastating, especially for Palestinians. Economic losses during the first nine months of the uprising exceeded USD5.2 billion, almost equivalent to the annual production of the economy. Palestinians living in poverty rapidly increased from 21 to 64% between October 2000 and April 2001, "creating…a looming humanitarian crisis" in the oPt (Roy 2002, 21-22). Furthermore, the separation barriers Israel started to construct in the WB in 2002 on the grounds of preventing "terrorist attacks" largely altered the landscape and life for Palestinians. Eighty-five percent of the concrete walls – reaching up to 8 meters – run through the Palestinian side of the 1948 armistice line[16] as a way of encircling Palestinian communities and penetrating their agricultural land (PASSIA 2013, 355).

As for the GS, the Israeli government shifted its policy from occupation to "separation, isolation and containment" (Roy 2012) by unilaterally executing "disengagement" in 2005, where they withdrew all their troops and settlements but remained in control over land, sea, and air routes to the outside (Samhouri 2006, 3). As a result, territorial contiguity between the WB and the GS was further eroded, and the situation in the GS continued to deteriorate to an extent that the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator described it as "miserable and dangerous" (Samhouri 2006, 1).

It was in this context that Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian legislative election. This was a product of the growing unpopularity of Fatah, a political party that had dominated the PA and had served to ensure security for Israel rather than security and well-being for Palestinians (Mandy 2006, 740). Moreover, the PA's reputation for authoritarianism and corruption (Mandy 2006, 743) alienated many ordinary Palestinians. Although the election was declared "largely free and fair" by international observers (Youngs 2006, 12), international donors suspended aid and transactions with the PA (Mandy 2006, 740). This together with Israel's withholding of Palestinian tax

[16] UNOCHA, *10 Years since the international court of justice (ICJ) Advisory*, July 9 2014, https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_10_years_barrier_report_english.pdf (accessed January 23 2017).

revenues and customs dues, caused a sharp rise in unemployment, food and gas shortages, and crime and drug use among a people already suffering from a consistently declining economy and denial of self-determination for decades.

Such "collective punishment" in return for democracy (Mandy 2006, 750) did not help to positively change the situation. The pre-existing political strife between Fatah and Hamas culminated in a clash in the GS in June 2007. Once Hamas took full control of the GS, Israel started to blockade it. This blockade has continued to the present day, with flows of persons and goods to and from the GS being hugely restricted, creating severe shortages of essentials and resulting in the GS being described as an "open-air prison." On top of that, citizens of the GS have gone through three "wars" with Israel over the last ten years, in which the casualties were disproportionately higher on the Palestinian side, with 1,417 people killed in the war of 2008-2009,[17] 171 in 2012,[18] and 2,251 in 2014[19] (on the Israeli side, 13,[20] 6,[21] 71,[22] respectively). The war of 2014 was particularly devastating as described in the Introduction.

1.3 Educational Development and Interruptions in Palestine

Educational administration in Palestine has experienced three phases since 1948. In the first phase from 1948 to 1967, the Jordanian system was introduced in the WB and the Egyptian one in the

[17] Palestinian Center for Human Rights, https://web.archive.org/web/20090612193512/http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/PressR/English/2008/36-2009.html (accessed June 16 2018).
[18] IMEMC Agencies, *One Year Following the Israeli Offensive on Gaza: Justice for Palestinian Victims Still Denied*, http://imemc.org/article/66407/ (accessed June 16 2018).
[19] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the detailed findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1*, June 23 2015, A/HRC/29/CRP.4.
[20] UNOCHA oPt, https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_gaza_humanitarian_situation_report_2009_01_26_english.pdf (accessed December 31 2016).
[21] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Israel under fire-November 2012*, http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/pages/israel_under_fire-november_2012.aspx (accessed June 16 2018).
[22] UNOCHA oPt, *Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Emergency Situation Report* (as of 4 September 2014, 08:00 hrs), https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrep_04_09_2014.pdf (accessed December 31 2016).

GS. The second phase started in 1967, when education came under the Israeli military authorities. While the Jordanian and Egyptian systems were maintained, the Israeli authorities censored curricula and textbooks (de Santisteban 2002, 148; Altinok 2007, 10). Moreover, under an occupying power not interested in education for Palestinians, almost no teacher training was provided, and educational infrastructures were rarely constructed or renovated (Altinok 2007, 10). The only exception was the schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), who could provide education independently from Israeli control. The beneficiaries, however, were limited to the children who had the status of "refugee" in UNRWA's definition.[23]

During the first intifada, more acute educational disruptions occurred across the oPt. Forced school closures lasting anywhere from several months to four years resulted in the loss of one third to a half of school days for Palestinians (Nicolai 2007, 36-37). Frequent clashes on the streets made school commuting difficult. Moreover, many students as well as teachers were detained by the occupation forces (Alzaroo and Hunt 2003, 170; de Santisteban 2002, 149). Teachers were also faced with compulsory retirement, arbitrary transfer, or payment deductions (Alzaroo and Hunt 2003, 170; Altinok 2007, 11).

However, Palestinians were not unresponsive to the deprivation of educational opportunities. As a part of the non-violent resistance, there emerged a movement of "popular education" across the territories, in which people continued education through home-based schooling. University faculty prevented from going to their universities taught in this environment, and NGOs jointly developed materials for self-learning (Altinok 2007, 11; Nicolai 2007, 37-38, 120). While those grass-roots efforts played a significant role, it is not deniable that the disruptions during the period led to a long-lasting drop in educational standards in the oPt (Nicolai 2007, 37).

[23] UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict" (UNRWA, https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees [accessed June 16 2018]).

The third phase of educational administration came with the Oslo Accord in 1993. While the Oslo process was critically flawed, a certain progress was observed in education as education was one of the first sectors over which authority was transferred to Palestinians.[24] In 1994, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) was established[25], and the first Palestinian national curricula were developed in 2000. In the same year, formulation of a Five-year Educational Development Plan was also started, followed by an Education for All Plan in 2002 (Nicolai 2007, 56-58). However, this progress began to stall after the occurrence of the second intifada. School closures were again imposed, affecting 1,125 schools in the first four years of the uprising. School infrastructure was destroyed or converted to military bases by Israeli forces.[26] Besides such direct disruptions, restrictions on the movement of Palestinians prevented many children from going to school.

A sound educational environment was not restored even after violent clashes receded. In the WB, the expanding separation walls have increased commuting time for 3,000 students and teachers, sometimes from tens of minutes to hours (Akesson 2015, 193). A number of checkpoints, roadblocks, settlements and bypass roads connecting them have also made commuting longer and more difficult. And, even if a route to school is not physically blocked, harassment by soldiers and settlers often prevents children from attending school. In East Jerusalem and Area C, school construction requires a permit from the Israeli government, which is rarely issued, and this has led to a huge lack of school infrastructure. In Area C, for instance, 10,000 children are forced to study in tents, caravans, or tin shacks (Akesson 2015, 193).

In the GS, the blockade has caused huge shortages of educational materials.[27] Furthermore, large-scale destruction by the repeated military assaults has had great impact on education both

[24] Article VI (Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities), Declaration of Principles, 1993.
[25] In 2019, it was divided into Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education. The ministry was still MoEHE at the time of the authors' fieldwork as explained in "2. Methodology and Limitations," but now Moazy program is under the Ministry of Education.
[26] 97 schools were destroyed and 43 were changed to military bases in 2000-2004 (Altinok 2007, 25).
[27] Authors' interview with the officials from UNICEF Gaza office, May 8 2016.

physically and psychologically. In the 2014 war for instance, 150 schools were destroyed[28] and the difficulty of importing construction materials has prevented their reconstruction to date. Psychological impacts have also been serious. According to a study conducted three months after the 2008-2009 war, 64.11% of children aged 15-18 showed partial or full PTSD symptoms (Thabet et al. 2014, 76). It is also estimated that 45,000 children are currently being traumatized and need psycho-social intervention.[29]

2. Methodology and Limitations

Our research draws on life-stories collected through in-depth interviews, for which the authors conducted fieldwork twice. The first phase was conducted in May 2016 and consisted of preparatory work in which the authors interviewed the stakeholders involved in education in the oPt, including the staff in charge of Moazy in the MoEHE and its directorates in the major cities (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, and Gaza City). The principals and teachers of the Moazy centers in those cities, and international organizations and NGOs working on education, were also interviewed.

The second phase of fieldwork was conducted in August 2016, during which 23 life-story interviews were held with Palestinian adults and adolescents who had experienced both school drop-out and second chance for education. Based on the preparatory work, the following two conditions were set out for selecting the interviewees: first, they had to be an individual who had dropped out of either primary or lower secondary school for reasons related to the occupation, including its indirect impact; and second, be an individual who had completed Moazy.

As the second condition shows, the life-story interviews in this study only included cases in which individuals had successfully completed Moazy. This is because this study primarily

[28] UNOCHA, *Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza emergency Humanitarian Snapshot* (as of August 7 2014, 8:00 hrs), https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-emergency-humanitarian-snapshot-7-august-2014-800-hrs (accessed June 16 2018).
[29] Authors' interview with the officials from UNOCHA Gaza office, May 8 2016.

focuses on the enablers for and the effects of a second chance for education. In other words, the interview samples do not represent the entire population of school drop-outs in the oPt or Moazy participants. As a result of not including those who did not attempt to pursue continuing education after dropping out of school, or who did not succeed in completing Moazy, we cannot deny the possibility of causing some biases in life-story interviewees' responses, such as overvaluing the effects of Moazy and the role of education. However, in the situation of a dearth of data on life after dropping out from school in the oPt, the rationale for this paper rests on uncovering the voices of those who did overcome the experience of lost education caused by the military occupation, rather than on establishing a generalized theory covering the entire population of school drop-outs or Moazy participants.

The reasons for choosing life-stories as a primary source of information in this research are as follows. First, the subject of this research, i.e., a second chance to education for school drop-outs in the oPt, is a largely underexplored issue both in research and practice. Therefore, it is essential to grasp an overview at first by revealing the actual paths followed by those who have experience of dropping out of school and getting a second chance for education. This overview can be gathered through direct, in-depth interviews with these individuals. Second, the process of reaching a second chance is one of the main focuses of this study, and subjective/internal factors such as people's own perceptions and motivations are considered to play a significant part in addition to objective/external factors such as institutional environment. Since one of the major characteristics of life-story research is its close attention to the subjective side of an event (Harrison 2008; Becker 1970; Plummer 1990; Bertaux and Kohli 1984; Bertaux and Thompson 1997), it was considered to be a fitting method to use in this study. Another important characteristic of life-story research is that, because of its origin in the study of "deviancy" (Becker 1970; Sakurai 2002), the method enables researchers to understand, without prejudice, the reality faced by marginalized and voiceless populations through detailed and direct accounts of participants. Because those who miss out on education tend to be treated as insignificant and are

unheard in society, using life-story research in this way is considered to be an appropriate method to grasp the reality of their situations.

Life story research encompasses a broad range of approaches, from ones with a positivist paradigm to those with an interpretive paradigm, and sample size has varied from several individuals to more than 100 in previous studies (Bertaux and Kohli 1984; Bertaux and Thompson 1997). In this study, significant attention is paid to the unique context of each life-story, including each individual interviewee's own feelings, will, and decision-making, rather than pursuing statistical generalizations based only on objective and observable variables. At the same time, however, the study also seeks to identify commonly observed patterns, conditions, and elements underlying different life-stories, aiming to draw policy implications for practitioners. For this purpose of the study, it was decided that the authors would attempt to conduct 10 to 20 life-story interviews on the presumption that this would be sufficient to reach the point of saturation, where an additional life-story would only confirm the researcher's emerging interpretations through the recurrence of descriptions of the same situations, actions, relationships, and processes (Bertaux 1997, 14). The authors conducted 23 life-story interviews by the conclusion of this research, through which repetitive patterns were found as discussed later.

Table 1 shows the profiles of the 23 life-story interviewees. All the interviews were conducted jointly by the two authors, a male Palestinian and a female Japanese. In each interview, which was semi-structured and took on average one and a half to two hours, the latter mainly asked questions in English, then the former interpreted them into Arabic and vice versa for the responses from the interviewees. The venue for the interviews varied, depending mainly on the restrictions under the occupation as explained below.

Table 1: List of the Life-Story Interviewees

West Bank							Gaza Strip						
No	Sex	Age	Area	Grade of drop-out	Year of Moazy completion	Date of interview	No	Sex	Age	Area	Grade of drop-out	Year of Moazy completion	Date of interview
1	M	25	Sub Jerusalem	7th grade	2016	1-Aug-16	13	F	36	Gaza (East)	7th grade	2016	8-Aug-16
2	*	*	Hebron	7th grade	2015	2-Aug-16	14	M	41	Gaza (East)	4th grade	2016	8-Aug-16
3	F	32	Hebron	6th grade	2016	2-Aug-16	15	F	34	Gaza (East)	8th grade	2016	9-Aug-16
4	M	24	Jenin	6th grade	2016	3-Aug-16	16	M	50	Gaza (East)	4th grade	2016	9-Aug-16
5	M	31	Jenin	6th grade	2016	3-Aug-16	17	F	41	Gaza (East)	7th grade	2007	10-Aug-16
6	F	40	Jenin	8th grade	2010	3-Aug-16	18	F	38	Gaza (East)	8th grade	2009	10-Aug-16
7	M	22	Sub Jerusalem	8th grade	2016	4-Aug-16	19	M	36	Gaza (East)	5th grade	2008	11-Aug-16
8	M	50	Sub Jerusalem	6th grade	2014	4-Aug-16	20	M	38	Gaza (East)	7th grade	2009	11-Aug-16
9	F	42	Jerusalem	8th grade	2015	6-Aug-16	21	F	19	Khan Yunis	No enrollment	2015	14-Aug-16
10	F	42	Jerusalem	8th grade	2015	6-Aug-16	22	M	32	Khan Yunis	6th grade	2016	14-Aug-16
11	F	40	Ramallah	8th grade	2011	6-Aug-16	23	M	29	Khan Yunis	8th grade	2014	15-Aug-16
12	F	42	Ramallah	7th grade	2011	7-Aug-16	* We do not disclose the sex and the age of this interviewee for the consideration of the interviewee's safety.						

Source: Authors.

The authors worked to ensure geographical diversity in their interviewee selection process, as there are differences in the political and security situation between the WB and the GS and even within the various areas of the WB. For instance, the closer proximity to politically and religiously extremist settlers in downtown Hebron made this particular area highly volatile and dangerous. The authors were also careful about the diversity in age among interviewees since life under the occupation tends to be in different phases in terms of its intensity and tactics depending on age. Gender balance was another point of attention, as there seemed to be different tendencies between males and females in the reasons for school drop-out based on the findings of the preparatory work.

The educational directorates and Moazy centers helped in introducing potential candidates for life-story interviews according to the criteria. Once candidates were nominated, the authors

tried to contact each of them to explain the interview details and ask if they were willing to participate. This process of getting consent as well as conducting interviews required sensitive procedures, as the society of the oPt is burdened with a sense of alertness due to the constant atmosphere of uncertainty instilled by decades-long occupation. Therefore, the access to the life-story interviewees through educational directorates and/or Moazy centers proved to be significant in making interviewees feel secure and at ease when the researchers were strangers to them. One of the interviewees from Hebron was a clear case in point. This interviewee had been detained by the occupation forces a few times, the first of which occurred as an early teenager. Due to their lingering trauma and fear of another detention in the volatile environment, it was not easy for such a person to be interviewed by someone from outside the community. In this case, introduction by and the presence of the director of the Moazy center substantially facilitated the conduct of the interview.

Even in less sensitive cases, close attention was paid to providing the best environment for interviewees to recount candidly their personal experiences. This is more so in the case of female interviewees whom the authors interviewed at their homes. Because of the significance of hospitality in Palestinian culture, family members would gather to greet the guests; however, the authors tried to conduct each interview as privately as possible so that individual interviewees could feel at ease and could respond without any interruption.

Needless to say, fieldwork under the continuing military occupation posed significant challenges. The biggest challenge was holding interviews in the besieged GS, since every entry into the Strip requires permission by Israel. Although the authors had advantages, compared to local Palestinians, with their foreign passports that could facilitate applying for permission, the process was still lengthy and unpredictable. Despite the submission of required documentation a few months before the entry, the authors would receive the result only in the last minutes. This resulted in one of the authors being unable to get a permit for the first fieldwork and being allowed only a one-day permit for the second fieldwork. As a result, the authors were compelled to conduct

interviews using video conferencing, where one of them remained in Ramallah and the other entered the GS daily to meet the interviewees who had been invited to the office of JICA, the funding organization of this research, where video conferencing equipment was available. The use of video conferencing limited the efficiency and effectiveness of the interviews in two ways: firstly, the authors' communication with interviewees and even that between the two authors were not smooth due to disrupted connections, which required repetitions of questions and answers; and secondly, the absence of one of the authors in the same space with interviewees may have influenced the authors' ability to develop an intimate atmosphere with them, a critical factor when trying to draw candid responses especially when an interview touches upon sensitive and private aspects of interviewees' lives. In addition to these, the limited opening hours of Israeli border control also affected both efficiency and sufficiency of the interviews, as the author who entered the GS could stay in the strip only for a maximum of about five hours each day.

While in the WB, the researchers traveled to different areas to visit interviewees, mostly at their homes, the Moazy centers, or the educational directorates, except for a few cases in which interviewees came to the authors' hotels as they lived in the neighborhood. This is because the authors' foreign passports allowed them far easier movement than local Palestinians in an environment where military checkpoints are present almost everywhere. Nevertheless, the interviews in the WB were never free from the restrictions either, since the authors had to return to the "base city" of Ramallah before sunset to avoid the risk of crossing military checkpoints after dark.

Each interview was audio-recorded, except for two in which interviewees did not agree to audio recording due to concerns about their safety. The audio-recorded data was transcribed word by word in Arabic and then translated to English. For the two interviews without an audio-recording, the authors detailed notes, where they tried to record every exchange of conversation, were used for making transcriptions. The analysis of the transcribed data was carried out as follows. First, the authors read through the transcripts and categorized the interviewees' narratives

into the pre-set items for analysis, such as “reason for lost education,” “motivation to seek a second chance,” and “change after completing Moazy.” Although these items had been prepared before the fieldwork and the interviews were structured based on them, some modifications were made based on the situations that emerged during the interviews. Then, coding was conducted item by item, but across items as well when necessary. This was a cyclical process in which the narratives were at first grouped into subcategories then classified, integrated, abstracted, or conceptualized to uncover the patterns of actions and perceptions across them.

3. Findings from the Life-Story Interviews

While each of the 23 life-stories presented a unique path of losing and regaining an opportunity of education, some common patterns and tendencies emerged on the following matters: (1) how the interviewees dropped out of school and what role the military occupation played there; (2) what drove the interviewees seek a second chance of education and how they got access to Moazy; (3) what changes occurred in the lives of the interviewees after having completed Moazy; and (4) what roles and values education might have in the context of the oPt. Starting with a brief overview of the Moazy program, this section details each of those subjects by drawing on the narratives of the life-story interviewees.

3.1 Seeking Education in Parallel, Moazy: Parallel Education Aiming towards Grade Nine

Moazy is a program of Ministry of Education (former MoEHE[30]) that provides school-dropouts with two-year condensed education equivalent to Grades Seven to Nine in the upper basic level curriculum (see Table 2). It started in 2003 and was originally targeted at youth aged 13-18 who had dropped out of school due to the second intifada. As the needs were also high among the

[30] Moazy had been under MoEHE at the time of the authors’ fieldwork in 2016, but it came under the Ministry of Education in 2019, when MoEHE was divided into two separate ministries. See also note 25.

people over age 18, the target was later expanded to age 40.[31] At present, some Moazy centers even accept learners who are over 40 years of age.[32]

Table 2: Educational System in the oPt

Age	Grade	Level of Education
6	1	lower basic (compulsory)
7	2	
8	3	
9	4	
10	5	upper basic (compulsory)
11	6	
12	7	
13	8	
14	9	
15	10	
16	11	secondary
17	12	

Target of Moazy

Source: Based on the information from MoEHE website at http://www.moehe.gov.ps/en/About-the-Ministry/Education-System

The term "Moazy" means "parallel" in Arabic and derives from the "popular education" developed during the first intifada. As described earlier, Palestinians continued education during that period by managing a grassroots educational system parallel to the formal one that was largely interrupted by the occupation forces. This experience was institutionalized under the PA, when Palestinians faced another crisis of education during the second intifada.

The two-year Moazy program consists of four five-month semesters,[33] during which eight subjects[34] are taught in classes provided three days a week, usually involving two to three hours

[31] Authors' interview with MoEHE officials in the WB on May 3 2016.
[32] Authors' interview with the principal of a Moazy center in the WB on May 2 2016.
[33] Based on the "Program overview" of Moazy provided by MoEHE in May 2016.
[34] Arabic, mathematics, science, general culture, technology, religion, technical education, and English (based on the "Program overview" above).

per day in the afternoon. While there is no entrance exam, a Grade Six certificate is required, in principle, for enrollment. At the end of the two-year program, learners have to take an exam. Successful completion of the exam leads to the awarding of a Grade Nine certificate. Grade Nine has a significant meaning in the oPt, since it qualifies one to take *tawjihi*, a unified national exam for completing high school level at Grade 12 and moving on to colleges and universities.[35] In addition, the grade often becomes a prerequisite for other aspects in social life, for example, obtaining a drivers' license.

According to the MoEHE, there are 43 Moazy centers across the oPt, 36 in the WB and 7 in the GS, where 369 and 278 learners studied, respectively, in 2014/2015.[36] Although called a "Moazy center," the program is usually conducted in the buildings of formal schools, using classrooms in after-school hours. While the official records of MoEHE say there were 390 male learners and 257 female learners in 2014/2015, the authors repeatedly heard during the field visits that the number of female learners is larger than that of males. It was explained that male learners were often busy at work and could not afford to attend classes during business hours. MoEHE has no cumulative records of the number of graduates, but according to its official records, 287 learners had completed the program over the four years from 2003/2004 to 2007/2008.[37] There were also many voices heard during the fieldwork stating that more Moazy centers were necessary to meet second chance education needs. At the same time, however, the authors also heard that the number of enrollments in the program is less than expected so far. According to the authors' interview with MoEHE officials, they consider this gap is the result of the little awareness of the Moazy program held by the public. Therefore, the ministry intends in their future plans to strengthen the public campaign and advertisements for increasing enrollments along with teacher training and textbook and curriculum upgrading.

[35] The majority go for *tawjihi* after completing Grade 12, but the opportunity is open for those with a Grade Nine certificate.
[36] Based on the statistics on Moazy provided by MoEHE in May 2016.
[37] Based on the statistics on Moazy provided by MoEHE in May 2016.

Most Moazy centers provide separate classes for males and females with some exceptions.[38] There was also a case in which males and females were in the same class at first but were later separated based on the request from female learners to make them feel easier and more comfortable in asking questions.[39] The MoEHE sets no specific limit of the number of learners per class, and class sizes varied from a few learners to over 30 learners according to the authors' interviews. There is a wide variety in the ages of learners as well, ranging from late teens to 50s, though the majority appear to fall within the 20s to 40s.

3.2 The Reasons for Lost Education

Our focus in this research is the lost education caused by violent conflict, which in the current context of Palestine means lost education under the military occupation. The way in which the occupation interrupts education varies. Table 3 summarizes the reasons for school drop-outs, regardless of their links to the occupation, cited by educational stakeholders during the authors' first fieldwork. While some pointed to issues that were seemingly less relevant to the occupation, many described the situations in which the occupation plays direct or indirect roles in causing school drop-outs. It draws special attention that two frequently mentioned reasons, namely "economic situation" mainly for boys and "early marriage" for girls, were often related to the occupation just the same as more direct ones such as school closures, detention by the occupation forces, and movement restrictions. Regarding "economic situation," it was explained that boys had to quit school to work to help their families financially due to decreased family income caused by the occupation, e.g., obstructed economic activities under sieges and the killing of breadwinners by the occupation forces. As for "early marriage," many explained that girls were forced to drop out as their families feared for them to go to school in an environment where there

[38] For instance, in Hebron, there are a few Moazy centers where male and female learners are studying in mixed classes.
[39] According to the authors' interview with a Moazy graduate in the GS on August 10 2016.

were military checkpoints, violence and harassment by soldiers and settlers, or clashes between protesters and the occupation forces, and wanted them to get married earlier as a safer alternative.

Table 3: Reasons for School Drop-Out in the oPt

Relation to the Occupation	Male	Female
No clear mention to the occupation	- Difficulties in keeping up with classes / absence of follow-up system for the students with lower achievements - Violence from teachers - Opposition from family (especially for females) - Drug abuses (Jerusalem)	
Seemingly pervasive even in no-conflict zones, but often influenced by the occupation	- Economic situation (have to work for family)	- Early marriage - Economic situation (parents cannot afford to let all the children in a family go to schools)
Direct results of the occupation	- Participation in resistance activities	
	- Intifada (school closures, fear of unsafety in commuting schools, etc.) - Arrest, detention (including "administrative detention") - Movement restrictions (checkpoints, roadblocks, separation walls, "vehicle only" roads, long distance caused by the above etc.) - Harassments by Israeli soldiers/settlers - Fear caused by the above - Being "collaborators" for Israel - Injuries and trauma by wars - Bombardment	

Source: Authors.

The experiences of our life-story interviewees echoed these explanations, especially concerning early marriages. Five out of the 12 female interviewees said that they were forced to quit school and get married by their families and/or relatives who were worried about them going to school due to the turmoil during the first intifada, settler harassment, or checkpoints on the way to school. A female interviewee from the GS stated:

> "*Because of the occupation, many families were worried about their daughters and tended to let them get married. Soldiers were everywhere inside Gaza, and people were worried that their children could face soldiers. So, my parents decided to let me get married earlier.*"

Most of them said that they were strongly unwilling to follow such a forced decision but

too young to reject it. Another female interviewee from the GS described the experience as follows:

> *"Because of the first intifada and the occupation, it was dangerous to go to school – there were many clashes, demonstrations, and army tanks. I was too young [age 13] to make a decision – it was a family decision. It was a tragedy. When I had to leave school, I cried so much to the extent that my eyes got sick."*

A female interviewee from Jerusalem even expressed a strong anger for her forced drop-out and marriage. Her family lived in the Old City, where soldiers were chasing young teenage protesters. Her father thought the situation was dangerous for the 12-year old to commute to school and forced her to quit and get married. Recalling those days with an intense look in her eyes, the interviewee paused and said, "I will never forgive my father for forcing me to quit school at such a young age." She continued, "till this moment, my father asks me to forgive him, but I can't."

There is also a case in which a female interviewee from the WB had to leave school due to the family's financial difficulty caused by the change in the occupation policy. She said:

> *"My father had worked in Israel, and his work was hugely impacted by the first intifada…I was forced to drop out of school due to the economic burden in my family…."*

For 11 male interviewees "economic situation" accounted for the majority of the reasons for dropout, but their reference to the occupation was more reserved – only three out of the seven males who cited family economic condition as a reason for drop-out clearly stated its relation to the occupation. An interviewee from the WB just said, "you know how we live," when the authors asked why he had to quit school and begin to work "for money."

Several interviewees, both males and females, explained the reason for his/her drop-out by describing how hard and "discouraging" the situation was to continue to go to school, particularly during the two intifadas. An interviewee from the WB illustrated his experience during the second intifada as follows:

> *"There were military checkpoints on the way [to school], where you faced various problems, including school bag inspections, harassment, being kept for hours, sometimes just to be rejected to go through. On one occasion, I was stopped by a tank, which was a "flying" [mobile] check point and ordered by an Israeli soldier to go back. I told him I would not since I had an exam. The soldier said he would shoot me if I did not go back, and he actually shot in the seat of my bicycle. I was very much shocked…. Under those circumstances, I sometimes walked through a rainwater tunnel to go to school. Sometimes we had to detour due to checkpoints…we had to pay more than NIS 10 [USD 3.00] to reach school located at a distance that originally cost NIS 1.5…."*

Others mentioned how school closures, demonstrations and clashes, destruction of school facilities by the occupation forces, and settler attacks on school children made them fear and "lose interest" in going to school. There were also a few cases in which detention of a parent or self by the occupation forces made it difficult to continue education. Besides these, one interviewee presented another type of experience, where he was denied the right to go back to school by the occupation authority after a one-year interval due to his family's temporary move to a different town. Under the absolute power asymmetry between the occupier and the occupied, there was "no way to negotiate with them [about his rejoining the original school]."

Although such direct obstacles by the military occupation affected both boys and girls, it was worth noting that all male interviewees stated that they made the final decision of quitting school, rather than being forced by their family, which presents a sharp contrast to the stories of

female interviewees. Leaving school was perceived as a "positive" step by those boys, since it led to their increased role in the family and a sense of fulfillment that they had not felt at school. Contrastingly, dropping out of school tends to be linked to a negative image of imposition for girls, especially an imposed marriage, and a sense of deprivation. In emphasizing the sorrow and the sense of injustice they felt at that time, many female interviewees stressed how they had been good and smart at school. When asked about the feeling at the time of quitting school, a female interviewee from the WB said "[t]he feeling…was painful very much…I have lived together with the pain to date."

3.3 The Process of Acquiring a "Second Chance"

3.3.1 Motivations to Continue Education

The authors asked each life-story interviewee what drove him/her to seek a second chance for education and how they reached the Moazy program. While the responses varied, and sometimes one interviewee raised multiple factors, the sources of motivations can be largely classified into three categories. The first category comes from the interviewees' strong belief in their inherent rights to education and their potential for the future. This can be observed in the stories of many females forced to leave school for early marriage, which was often accompanied by a strong unwillingness to comply. For some, further difficulties, e.g., their new husband's violence, also followed. Many interviewees who had such experiences said that they had had a strong desire for education from the beginning but kept it to themselves, then started to take concrete steps years later as the environment began to allow them to reveal their real desires. Likely due to the hardships they had to go through against their own will, those female interviewees tended to express a deep sense of deprivation and need for compensation as a source of their motivation to seek education. A female interviewee from the WB stated:

"[I appreciate education] because I was deprived of education earlier; my motivation was

deprivation and compensation; education is something that I couldn't do in the past."

Another female interviewee from the WB even described her forced drop-out as "oppression," implying that restarting education was a means to liberate herself.

"I had always liked school and education. Despite this strong interest and passion for education, I was denied the opportunity, so I needed a compensation for it…I had a strong will and determination that I wanted to recover something I had been deprived of…There was no specific trigger for my pursuit for education. It was a continuous spark, as I had been oppressed for so long."

For those interviewees, seeking education even meant a way of proving their existence, as stated by a female interviewee from the GS:

"I want to continue education because I want to leave an impact. I want to leave a mark that I was here."

The second category of motivations comes from a social atmosphere that highly appreciates education and knowledge (many interviewees used the term "knowledge," *Ilm* in Arabic, almost interchangeably with education). A female interviewee from the GS described her experience as follows:

"I used to be told by my family and in society 'people having certificate is something.'…So I wanted to get a certificate to prove I am worthy, I can be somebody. My source of energy was the perception of the society...By achieving education, you can be somebody, [you can learn] how to deal with, interact with people through formal education."

One of the factors behind such appreciation seems to be religious influence, or belief in Islam, as a few interviewees, especially those from the GS, explained the importance of education and knowledge by citing some verses from the Qur'an. For instance, one male interviewee from the GS responded to the question of how he thought education would benefit the society by saying, "God said in his sacred book [the Qur'an]: an educated person is better to God than an uneducated one."

The emphasis on education in Islam also leads to some scholarly requirement to support the religious responsibility, which seems to become another motivation to continue education. A female interviewee from the GS, for instance, mentioned that she wanted to become an Islamic preacher (*imam*) to help others, and therefore participated in Moazy to finish Grade Nine to take *tawjihi*, a requisite qualification for *imam*s. On the other hand, there was also an interviewee who sought education because religious achievement was not enough for him to have self-esteem. This male interviewee from the GS, who had been an *imam* for a long time and had completed Moazy and *tawjihi* but had dropped out of university due to financial difficulties, stated:

> *"I feel injustice in this life because I didn't finish university…it's like I have no value in this life…in terms of the society…I am now an imam thank God, I have memorized the Qur'an but 'till this day I don't have a university degree, until this moment I walk around almost ashamed of myself to be honest."*

His words show how hard it is to live in a society when you have lower educational achievement. This sense of embarrassment amplifies when compared to others, and this is the third category of motivation observed in many male interviewees who dropped out for "economic reasons." As mentioned earlier, those interviewees left school by choosing work over study due to a mixture of reasons such as financial difficulties at home and a discouraging environment caused by the occupation. As they were "too young to understand the value of education," they

decided to leave school with little regret at first, but a desire for education started to grow when they saw people around them – previous classmates, neighbors, or even their own siblings – continuing and succeeding in education. It was a sense of inferiority and feeling of jealousy that drove those interviewees to seek a second chance of education. A male interviewee from the GS stated:

> *"I would see my classmates, friends and neighbors or people I know go to school and study tawjihi, some started going to college, some traveled abroad, so I started questioning myself 'Why am I less than them?'"*

These stories imply the existence of social stigma attached to being "uneducated." According to an interviewee from the WB, it is not an overt discriminatory behavior but more nuanced, nevertheless it is a clearly detectable attitude or atmosphere that exists in the society. She stated:

> *"It is from the people around me, the way people look at me as being 'less.' I can get a sign or hint from the people around me that I am 'less.' This gives me motivation, makes me feel that I want to prove like 'No, I am equal.'"*

The level of education expected in these contexts is passing *tawjihi* or getting a university degree. In particular, the life-stories collected clearly revealed that succeeding in *tawjihi* makes a huge difference, as described by a male interviewee from the GS:

> *"Tawjihi is something special, it is priceless. tawjihi is like a passport. …tawjihi is needed for whatever you do, for instance study, job, and marriage."*

This assertion is supported by the fact that almost all of our life-story interviewees had taken or at least were preparing for *tawjihi*. What requires special attention here is that for many interviewees passing *tawjihi* or going to university seems to be an ultimate goal in itself, rather than a means for a better job or income. While expressing their strong desire to succeed in *tawjihi* and go to university, the interviewees often had little clear idea about what they want to learn at universities or to do after graduation. For them, being a university graduate, or at least a person with a success in *tawjihi*, seems to have a significant meaning in itself.

Better job, income, or livelihoods were hardly raised as a motivation to continue education in the 23 life-stories, just as shown by Alzaroo and Hunt (2003). When asked if those factors were among their motivations, most interviewees responded negatively, saying that they already had a job or work to do even before having participated in Moazy. Rather, many explained that education was important as a basis for communication and interaction with others. The phrase that educated people can "interact, discuss or deal with people better" is the expression repeatedly heard in the life-story interviews. It indicates that Palestinian society emphasizes the enduring idea of interacting and communicating with family and community. To be someone with knowledge is a desirable characteristic that entails recognition and respect, and education is the means towards such a highly valued trait. It is common in Palestinian social life to discuss local, regional, and international politics, which often intercepts and impacts the Palestinian issue. It is the idea that educated people can analyze and argue issues and political matters with the ability to clarify, convey a point, persuade or simply talk about them in a reasonable manner.

3.3.2 The Road to Reach the Moazy Program

Many life-story interviewees tried to educate themselves, by reading books and newspapers for instance, after having become aware of their desire for education. For some interviewees, reciting

the Qur'an and participating in lectures at mosques were also important ways to gain education. There were also several cases, mostly among females, in which interviewees took various training courses – from handicrafts to disaster prevention – that appear to have been pursued as a compensation for the loss of education. A female interviewee from the WB said, "I was looking for any courses or workshops to keep me active." It needs to be noted, however, that this training did not substitute for the educational opportunities they had lost. After undertaking multiple training (an interviewee had participated in 33 courses), none of those interviewees were satisfied, and continued to pursue returning to the track of formal education (i.e., an official and therefore considered to be credible recognition of educational achievement). A female interviewee from the GS stated:

> *"The look of people towards someone with [formal] education is different...General knowledge...could have a lot of mistakes, but education and science [taught in formal education] is trustworthy."*

It was, however, not necessarily easy for many life-story interviewees to reach the Moazy program. As MoEHE admitted, the Moazy program has been "poorly marketed" and thus is little-known to the public. Most of the life-story interviewees came to know Moazy by chance from the people around them, such as friends, neighbors, people at mosques, or through sporadic advertisement on the street, newspapers, or TV, after having asked around for the information concerned. Some others even visited the local directorates of MoEHE and directly asked for an opportunity to continue education or take *tawjihi*. As a whole, the availability of the information about Moazy is highly dependent on voluntary actions by learners themselves and casual encounters with information sources. This indicates the lack of systematic outreach in the Moazy program, which has resulted in a far lower enrollment compared to the potential number of people

who dropped out of school and need a second chance at education.[40] In fact, several life-story interviewees pointed to the necessity of strengthening Moazy's advertisement and outreach activities.

In contrast to the difficulty in finding the program, it appears to be relatively easy and quick to enroll in Moazy once the life-story interviewees come to know about it. The only requirement is a submission of a Grade Six certificate. Thanks to the well-functioning system of educational registration in the oPt, the life-story interviewees could get their certificate from their previous schools in just a few days, even many years after having dropped out. Even when one cannot find his/her past educational certificate, there is an alternative: prospective learners can complete the literacy program provided by MoEHE first, where you require no certificate for enrollment, and can obtain a Grade Six certificate upon completion of the two-year program. In fact, several life-story interviewees said that they had studied in the literacy program first and came to know about Moazy while they were studying there, indicating that participation in the literacy program plays an introductory role for Moazy. Furthermore, some interviewees were even accepted to the program with a Grade Five certificate or a certificate issued by an NGO, or by taking a simple test at the time of their visit to a Moazy center.

While such flexibility and openness are considered to play an important role in allowing the accommodation of as many people in need as possible, the concern is that it may cause gaps in the educational levels among learners in a class. According to an interviewee from the WB, some of her classmates needed to study literacy and she helped them to do it. Another also said that although the program was easy for her, it was difficult for some of her classmates, leading to additional activities in the classes where stronger learners helped weaker ones.

Moreover, it was pointed out as well that only a part of the learners in a class are actually

[40] Although there is no statistical data about the number of people who missed out on education, it is estimated that there are at least several thousands to a few tens of thousands of school drop-outs per year if calculations are based on the total size of population by ages and school enrollment and completion rates and changes in these over the years. In the meantime, the number of Moazy learners per year is just a few hundred across the oPt.

committed to studying and there were even drop-outs over the course of the two-year program. Although a detailed assessment of the quality of Moazy classes is beyond the scope of this paper, these episodes imply some concern about the quality of education as well as about the insufficiency of the screening for enrollment process. At the same time however, the drop-outs can be attributed not only to the quality of the program but also to the environment surrounding learners (i.e., the ongoing military occupation and the educational interruptions under it). It should be remembered that the Moazy program was created as a countermeasure against lost education during the second intifada but people in the oPt are still facing continuous, or even deepening, challenges even though that intifada is over.

Beside the factors described above there seems to be another kind of environment that may negatively influence learners' motivation to continue the program. In responding to a question about any further difficulties they faced in the course of learning in Moazy, some interviewees mentioned a fear of being "discouraged" or "embarrassed" when going to Moazy centers. A male interviewee described his experience as follows:

> *"My age was one of the obstacles I had to overcome during the program. I am old…all of sudden they [people around him] would see me carrying a bag, going out to study, and I'd be too reluctant to tell them I'm studying in Moazy, So I would take my book and hide it in an envelope so no one would ask where I'm going. No one around me knew, I kept it low-key, until…I was done."*

In fact, many interviewees kept their studying in Moazy secret for a while to the people around them, sometimes even to their own family as well. Some learners also mentioned the difficulty in walking through the school yard and corridors where many young students of regular schools were staying and playing after school. There were also some interviewees who had a hard time getting the understanding and permission from their workplace to take leave to go to classes.

Although all the interviewees in this research said they could get such permission in the end, and some even told the authors that their bosses or colleagues were very encouraging, the difficulty at the initial stage indicates the existence of social unawareness of the value of adult education like Moazy.

3.4 Impact of Moazy and Second Chance of Education

When the life-story interviewees were asked if Moazy brought any change in their life, almost all of them responded positively, stressing the importance of providing people who missed out education with such a "second chance." The details of the changes the interviewees described can largely be divided into two categories depending on where they occurred. The first category is the psychological changes that took place within each of the individual interviewees. The typical responses in this category were as follows:

"It[Moazy] opened a new horizon;"

"I had been like a person in coma, and Moazy was an injection to wake me up;"

"[W]hen I first heard about Moazy, I felt it was a rescue. I even felt that I started to breathe better;"

"Moazy rescues people from drowning, from the situation where they do not know what to do."

As seen above, many interviewees valued Moazy with expressions that represent a beginning, indicating that the program is mostly appreciated as a first step towards a higher level of education (i.e., *tawjihi* and university), rather than as a program that satisfies their desire for education in itself. In fact, it was often pointed out in the interviews that Moazy was not enough for people to be regarded as "educated." A male interviewee from the GS said, "finishing Grade Six is not anything." This kind of reaction is considered a reflection of the social perception that values a person as "educated" only when he/she finishes at least *tawjihi* as discussed earlier.

However, insufficiency in the level of achievement does not mean that the Moazy program is not significant. A male interviewee stated:

> *"I am proud of Moazy certificate more than my university certificate because it opened the gate or way to knowledge and education. If there were not Moazy, I would have remained the same, remained illiterate."*

What this statement implies is the significance of giving the chance to take an initial step, which seems to be hugely difficult for people forced to run off the regular track of formal education.

On the other hand, there were also some life-story interviewees – mostly females – who regarded Moazy as meaningful in itself. One female interviewee from the WB said, "It [the completion of Moazy program] gave me confidence and awareness of my existence as a human being." Similarly, another female interviewee also stated that she, "isolated and confined in a narrow place" in the past, became more confident, and proud of herself after she finished the program. Those responses suggest that the achievement of the Grade Nine level of education through Moazy brought a fundamental change in their self-recognition.

The second category of the changes were those that occurred in relationships with others. It was commonly heard in the interviews that the interviewees came to feel themselves being more respected, acknowledged, and better treated by their family, friends, neighbors, or other people around them. A female interviewee who had been ridiculed for years by her sisters with university degrees stated that her relationship with the sisters became more "frank" after she had completed the Moazy program. Many interviewees also brought up the changes in their relationships with their children, stating that the children were now able to be proud of their father/mother as he/she completed Moazy (and *tawjihi* and/or university afterward).

The changes in terms of relationships are not limited to those with the people close to the interviewees. The authors repeatedly heard the life-story interviewees, especially those who

achieved *tawjihi* or university, saying that they could now walk on the street with their head high. By passing the exam and successfully enrolling in higher education, the interviewees seemed to have found themselves finally becoming free from the disgraceful label of "uneducated" and entitled to be a respected human being. The following words by a male interviewee from the GS represents such a feeling well:

> *"[In the past] I couldn't raise my head up high but thank God after that [success in tawjihi] I was able to. …here in Gaza, whoever doesn't have a tawjihi is identified as ignorant and illiterate, but whoever has a college degree can go on with life, so if you get your tawjihi you've overcome the required stage of your life in our country. If you have your tawjihi you can go out and about almost anywhere because people respect a person with tawjihi."*

These voices reiterate the depth and width of the sense of inferiority or embarrassment that people who have missed out on education have to struggle with, just as described in Section 3-3-1. Although the high appreciation for and achievements in education are generally regarded as a positive, and even an admirable characteristic of Palestinian society, it is also important to pay more attention to the reverse effect – a sort of marginalization that people who failed to meet such a social expectation have to live with. While it goes without saying that the greatest possible efforts must be made to ensure appropriate educational opportunities for all school-aged children to prevent drop-out, it is also important to establish and raise awareness of an alternative educational system like the Moazy program among the Palestinians and the people working on education in the oPt including international donors. This is so that those who are taken off the regular track of education can make a fresh start if they want to. This is particularly significant in a conflict-prone area such as the oPt, where the ruthless reality has been making educational disruptions pervasive. In this regard, it is also worth noting that some life-story interviewees stressed the significance of formal education as a sphere where they accomplish education.

According to a female interviewee from the GS, having a certificate of formal education means that she has "something legitimate" and this makes a huge difference from just being knowledgeable without a certificate in terms of social acknowledgement.

3.5 Roles and Values of Education

Following the conversation concerning Moazy, the focus of each life-story interview was extended to a larger issue, the role and value of education for Palestinians in the oPt. According to Alzaroo and Hunt (2003), education works as a "coping strategy" for Palestinian refugees in three ways: it provides a remedy for the loss of their homeland; it enables them to understand reality and stand up for Palestinian political liberation; and it becomes a tool for identity-building through which they can maintain their cultural heritage even in exile. Although our study was not limited to refugees, some of the voices we collected presented a similar viewpoint to the former two aspects. Regarding the first aspect, a principal of one Moazy center said, "land is lost, we cannot afford to lose education." In his view, education is "the only cohesive thing left for us."[41] As for the second aspect, some life-story interviewees stated that education benefits a society because educated people can "understand and deal with the situation better"[42] and "decide the direction to which society moves in."[43]

At the same time, however, the responses from many of our life-story interviewees revealed a slightly different trio of more nuanced or restrained perspectives on the meaning of education for Palestinians in the oPt. The first perspective is from a standpoint of individuals struggling to live in the military occupation, encapsulated by the phrase that education is a "weapon." One female interviewee from the WB stated:

[41] Authors' interview in the WB May 2 2016.
[42] Authors' interview in August 2016 with a female interviewee from the WB.
[43] Authors' interview in August 2016 with a female interviewee from the WB.

"It [education]is like a weapon in the hand in which you can defend yourself."

Based on her own experience of having been forced to leave school for early marriage, she stated:

"In Palestine, many women including me might think that they might lose their husbands…he might be killed or wounded or arrested. So, when I become educated, I would be able to manage my life and be responsible for the expenses of my home. Education is a weapon in my hand that I will need to live in dignity without anybody's support. This is the reason which motivates all Palestinian women to learn."

For her, what is acquired through education is the only thing she can count on to maintain her life without fear in a context where anything – land, home, properties and even her own families – can be taken away at any time by the overwhelming power of the occupation forces. In other word, education is a "portable and durable asset/solution" (Dryden-Peterson 2011, 3, 5) and the only remaining way to have "control over… [one's] fate" and "escape from passivity and dependence" (Alzaroo and Hunt 2003, 175). Being able to have such a feeling of autonomy is critically important for Palestinians in the oPt, as they have been denied their individual rights as well as national self-determination and independence. Since individual autonomy and agency is an indispensable part of human dignity (Karlberg 2013, 12), education for Palestinians serves not only as a tool for acquiring knowledge and skills and thereby wider job opportunities and income but also as an instrument for bringing about a sense of dignity. Here, we can see the value of education as a "means of survival" (Fronk et al. 1999, 232; Van Dyke and Randall 2002, 17; Nicolai 2007, 21) in both tangible and intangible ways. Education is an enabler to make a living and moreover to keep human dignity, in the face of continuous deprivation and humiliation under the occupation.

The second perspective came when the authors asked if there was any meaning for

education in the oPt where the unemployment rate is incredibly high.[44] The fact that many youth (more than half of university graduates in the GS[45]) cannot find a job could lead to an idea that providing education does not solve but could exacerbate problems by generating many highly educated but jobless youths who could be a "destabilizing" factor in society. Solutions designed for such situations tend to focus on vocational and skills training, rather than a second chance to access formal education.[46] However, the responses from the life-story interviewees delineate a different picture. One male interviewee from the WB stated:

> *"You never know at what point the situation could change. Employment rate could increase someday. A certificate is a weapon – even if no way to use it here at present, it can be used somewhere else."*

Another male interviewee from the GS also said:

> *"It is true that Gaza is suffering from high unemployment. But you never know what happens in the future. When the situation turns better, you can become better off thanks to education."*

Gathering these responses was surprising, since it appears to be a widely shared view that the military occupation is unlikely to end in the foreseeable future. This is the reality that Palestinians living under it know the most. One of the life-story interviewees from the WB said, "[n]o one can [do anything against the occupation], they are here daily since the beginning."

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[44] It is estimated as 27% across all the working age population, 40% for men aged 15-24 and 63% for women in the same age ranges. The rates differ largely between the WB and GS as well as by gender as follows: in the WB, men at 15.3% and women 27.4%, while in the GS men at 40.2% and women 56.9% (ILO 2015, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*).

[45] It is the estimate in the first quarter of 2013, according to Asmaa al-Ghoul, "Gaza's unemployed graduates: between Google and falafel," *Almonitor*, June 24 2014.

[46] For instance, the World Bank emphasizes the importance of private-sector investment, skills development and job-matching. For the details, see http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/obs-crisis-palestine-needs-innovative-response.

Despite such a reality and a clear understanding of it, many life-story interviewees in fact talked about "change in the future." It is often pointed out that Palestinians see education as one of – or sometimes the only – hope (Nicolai 2006, 25 and 2007, 124; Jabr 2009, 723), though how it can be so has not been sufficiently explained. The life-story interviewee responses above tell us that education could enable individuals confined to a desperate situation not to lose their belief in a brighter future. Being educated is highly valued in the oPt, and it serves as a foundation for believing in a promising, or at least decent, future. Although the harsh reality of the occupation has been largely constraining the realization of such a future, education grants individuals the foundation that could help him/her to keep believing someday the constraints would disappear. A life-story interviewee from the GS expressed it this way:

> *"If people are educated, knowledge builds society. Human resource is the most important thing for preparing for the future. The situation like this does not last forever; it will change. Human resource is essential. Education should be sought for itself."*

The third perspective is more about the meaning of education for Palestinian society as a whole from seeing education as an effective tool to fight against the occupation. As Alzaroo and Hunt (2003, 176-177) note in describing how education played a critical role in mobilizing the population and organizing the Palestinian national liberation movement, seeing education as a tool for resistance is not necessarily new. What draws attention here is that the way of resistance mentioned by our life-story interviewees was more external-oriented, rather than being the internal mobilization of the local population. Interviewees stated that they could express themselves and speak out better to the world with education. A female interviewee from the WB said, "if you are educated, you can convey your voice to the world and defend your cause." Another female interviewee from the GS even expressed the following:

"Education has a big role [in the oPt]. All people, especially in Gaza, seek education, even those who are not educated. Education has culture. There are a lot of cultures that a human being wants to learn from to benefit his or her people. It is like we need to understand the language of the enemy [sic.]. That is like a weapon, facing the enemy. One must understand the enemy's language. This is the first goal of the Palestinian people, and not to Gaza only. …I want now to know what people say about Palestinian people and I need to understand what they say to be able…to face these people and know how to defend my country."

She pointed out that when educated, you can describe the injustice and oppression in your own words and tell your story by yourself. If not educated, your "enemy" would speak for you and mislead the world. Many of the life-story interviews showed a keen sense in reaching out the larger world and global society in a direct manner through education. An interviewee from the GS said that Palestinians need to explain in the international media the Palestinian cause for themselves and not let the "enemy" speak for them. While there could be multiple interpretations of the reasons for this outward-looking tendency in the interviewees' responses, such as the development of a globally interconnected world today, one critical factor seems to be a realization that what they can directly do by themselves to end the occupation is very limited. Their predicament cannot be solved without changes in the outside world's understanding and action. In this regard, some interviewees see education as a way of confronting an existential threat or "sociocide" (Jawad 2012)[47] by outside forces overwhelmingly more powerful than Palestinians. A female interviewee from the WB stated:

"Education is about proving your existence…educated people can prove themselves…you can

[47] According to Jawad, sociocide is a concept that means "the processes that are used for achieving the total destruction of Palestinians not only as a political national group (politicide) but also as a society (sociocide)," with an "objective of the expulsion (i.e., the uprooting) of the Palestinians from their homeland" (Jawad 2012).

support your family and homeland."

A male interviewee from the GS stressed the importance of being knowledgeable as a society because "the main goal of the occupation is to make Palestinians ignorant." There was also an interviewee who said that knowledge was important to be able to defend themselves. Education is regarded as a means to "make society aware of the situation" and "broaden the horizon of the surrounding situation," according to another male interviewee from the GS. He stated, "the principle of humanity is to live with rights" and "educated people can demand rights in a better, stronger way."

Conclusion

Over the last 70 years, Palestinians have been experiencing loss of homeland, displacement, and deprivation and humiliation from military occupation. In particular the occupation has been the most significant collective aspect of life for the people in the oPt over the last half -century, under which going to school means facing formidable obstacles on a daily basis, such as checkpoints, separation walls, clashes, detention, and harassment and intimidation by settler vigilantes. For girls, it brings a more acute dilemma since their families fear for their safety and force them to drop out of school at an early age, which clearly violates their basic human rights. Moreover, the military occupation not only directly hampers going to school but also disrupts every aspect of life in the oPt, including the economy, resulting in an indirect but significant impact on the ability of families to send their children to school.

In such context, the people in the oPt appear to value education as a weapon that gives you a sense of autonomy and dignity, a foundation for keeping hopes alive, and a tool to allow their voices to be heard by the international community as the 23 life-stories illustrated. Just as in many previous studies, our life-story interviews reiterated high appreciation and belief in education and

knowledge in Palestinian society, where people revere those who are highly educated. Such a value can be regarded as a virtue as well as an advantage for society.

What the life-stories we collected also revealed, however, is the existence of those who feel difficulties in their lives and thus fear being left behind in such an "educated" society. As the military occupation continues to deprive Palestinians of the fundamental right of education, a second chance for education (like that in the Moazy program) is of critical importance in realizing a society where no one will be left behind. This has become an idealistic goal agreed on globally in the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015). Therefore, more attention should be paid to ensuring diverse pathways of education like Moazy. In particular, the authors suggest the importance of the following three matters for this purpose. First, Ministry of Education is recommended to strengthen advertising Moazy to increase public knowledge of this program. As indicated in our findings, one of the biggest issues regarding Moazy is that the program is not well known in the society due to a lack of systematic outreach. This causes many people in need problems in accessing the benefits of the program. Moreover, Moazy learners must face a sense of embarrassment even though they have been able to grasp this second chance. Expanding advertisement and outreach activities, especially collecting and introducing the success stories of Moazy learners, is expected to promote the program and to change the negative notion attached to adult education.

Second, donors and the aid community need to recognize the importance of second chance education in the oPt. At present, there are no donor or aid agency supporting the Moazy program. It even seems that almost no one in the community is interested in it. One staff member of an aid agency interviewed by the authors stated that a priority should be placed on the assistance of the majority (i.e., formal schooling for school-aged children), rather than a small number of disadvantaged people considering the substantial budget limitations. Although it goes without

saying that quality education for school-aged children must be secured, the importance of ensuring diverse pathways of education like Moazy should not be ignored or understated in the situation where the existing education system cannot avoid the continuous obstacles resulting from military occupation.

Third, more research is needed to further understand Moazy and the second chance for education in general within the oPt. In the light of the limitations faced in the present research, the following areas are suggested as foci for future research. First, it is expected to expand the targets for life-story interviews. There are three groups that the authors consider are especially important: Moazy graduates who dropped out of school because of detention by the occupation authority; Moazy program dropouts; and other school dropouts who could not obtain a second chance for education. The authors tried to reach the first group but with little success in this study – only one person agreed to be interviewed and others rejected involvement due to fears for their security. Detention is one of the significant and distinctive reasons for school drop-out in the oPt. Its impact on the lives of those detained appears to be profound, especially on the psychological aspect as the rejection of the authors' interviews clearly show. Therefore, more cases of ex-detainees should be studied in order to uncover diverse pathways to and experiences of second chance education.

Shedding light on the second and the third groups is important in figuring out not only enabling factors but also obstructive factors in obtaining second chance education. The present study only targeted those who had successfully *completed* Moazy. While the authors do believe that such a focus on success stories is of great significance in the dearth of fundamental knowledge about second chance education in the oPt, we also acknowledge that it is not enough to bring about concrete improvements in the practice. Uncovering the experiences of those who obtained

a second chance once but had to give it up halfway or who never succeeded in obtaining a second chance could tell us how to make second chance education attainable for all who need it.

Second, a detailed evaluation of the Moazy program would also be a crucial area for future research. Although it is out of the scope of the present study, what the authors heard in the interviews suggests that the current Moazy program has several quality and quantity issues such as gaps in the academic levels of learners in a class and a chronic shortage of teachers. The detailed examination of these matters is indispensable to make the program more responsive to the needs of learners.

Occupation is both imposing systems of control and a humiliation. The idea that another person is in control of one's life, at all levels, represents the kind of crisis that runs deep in the psyche of both an individual and community. Education and its benefits are well recognized, but it is also a statement in itself affirming the dignity and humanity of an individual living under the control of an occupying and humiliating power. As the life-story interviewees pointed out, owning their own voice and not letting the "enemy" to speak on their behalf is more about engaging the world with those whom Palestinians believe share common humanity and common sense. To Palestinians, the international community has always failed them by not taking a just and clear stand against a prolonged and illegal military occupation. The predicament, here, compels the Palestinian individual, family, and society to deeply reflect on reality. A quest gradually emerges from this – searching continuously for human dignity and knowledge to preserve the humanity of self and community as Palestinians.

Education here, is placed in the heart of the collective quest and psyche of the Palestinian people. The concept of education evolves into much more than its immediate material results, transforming within itself as means of coping with every-day living, maintaining a minimum level of dignity and respect, and painstakingly mitigating the conflict that is beyond the ability of an individual. The idea of commuting to school and attending classes is in itself an act of constructing

normalcy within the chaos of the military occupation, combined with a deep inner conviction of a hope that a future is achievable at some foreseen and imagined point. The Palestinian idiom/proverb "*Al Mishwar Tawil*" is a well-known saying, meaning the "Road Is Long." If there is a landmark that stands out along this "road," education is probably the most obvious one, consisting not only of regular schooling but also of the experiences of the many who are turning and aiming at a second chance for education.

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Abstruct (in Japanese)

要約

暴力的紛争は人々の生命及び教育を受ける権利を含む基本的権利に大きな困難と制限をもたらす。世界中で人道的危機の発生が続く今日、そのような緊急下においてどのように教育を提供していくか、という問題への関心が高まっている。本稿は、パレスチナを事例として、この新たな領域に含まれる諸課題のうち、紛争により学校を辞めざるを得なかった人々による教育機会の再獲得(セカンド・チャンス教育)に焦点を当てる。

パレスチナの人々は、何十年にも渡る軍事占領により、土地、家、財産、そしてその他広範囲に及ぶ基本的人権を奪われ続けてきた。パレスチナ人に対する社会的・個人的自己決定権の否定は、終わりの見えないまま何世代にもわたって続いている。そのような状況にあっても、パレスチナの人々は自身の生活及び社会の構築に奮闘し、教育はその中で多大な努力がなされ成果を上げてきた分野の一つである。パレスチナ自治政府の教育・高等教育庁が運営する“Al-Taleem Al-Moazy”と呼ばれる2年間の教育プログラムもそうした努力の一つであり、学校教育を中退した成人及び青年層の人々に教育を保障することを目的としている。本稿では、このMoazyプログラムの卒業生に着目し、被占領地パレスチナ（oPt）のヨルダン川西岸地区及びガザ地区において、教育機会を逸した経験を持つ人々の声を明らかにすることを試みる。これまで、比較的教育水準の高いパレスチナ社会において、教育機会を失うという経験がどのようなものであるか、という点には十分な関心が払われてこなかった。本稿はこれを明らかにすることで、oPtにおける教育の意味について考察を深めることに貢献する。

本研究が主なデータとして使用するのは、詳細インタビューを通じ収集された23名のMoazyプログラム卒業生のライフストーリーである。インタビューでは、彼らの学校教育はどのように阻害されたか、社会の中で「教育を受けていない人」である経験はどのようなものであったか、どのような内的・外的要因が教育機会の再獲得を可能にしたか、について聞き取りが行われた。

インタビューにより、占領が教育へ及ぼす影響は、学校閉鎖、拘束、移動制限といった直接的な障害をはるかに超えた広範囲なものであることが明らかとなった。占領はoPtにおける生活のあらゆる面を阻害し、それは経済や人々の心理的側面にも及ぶ。このことが、子どもたちを学校に通わせる各家庭の能力及び意思にも重大な影響をもたらしている。特に、インタビューを受けた多くの女性たちのライフストーリーが明らかにしたのは、軍事占領が暴力や嫌がらせ、種々の制限をもたらす環境の中で、少女たちが家族により退学させられ、少しでも安全な選択肢としての結婚を余儀なくされている厳しい現実である。

こうした様々な困難にも拘らず、多くのインタビュー協力者は、自身の教育を受ける権利、そして自らが有する将来への可能性に対して確固とした信念を持っており、その

強さが教育への再度のアクセスを可能にした重要な要因であったと考えられる。また、パレスチナの文化的環境及び社会的風潮として、教育が非常に重視されるあまり「教育を受けていないこと」が恥とみなされる傾向があることも確認された。一部のインタビュー協力者にとっては、こうした文化的・社会的規範が再教育の機会を求める主要なモチベーションになっているものと見受けられた。

さらに、本研究では、パレスチナ社会において教育がそのように価値あるものと高く評価される背景について、教育を追求することが次の三点の達成に繋がるとみなされていることを明らかにした。第一に、占領当局によりあらゆるものがいつ何時奪われるかわからないという環境の中で、個人及びコミュニティの自律と尊厳を確保することである。第二に、占領の過酷な現実に直面する中でも、希望を保ち続ける原動力となることである。第三には、正義公正の実現にむけ、国際社会において自分たち自身の声で語ることである。

キーワード: パレスチナ、セカンド・チャンス教育、紛争、ライフストーリー、尊厳

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